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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000481

SIPDIS

FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AND SA A/S ROCCA FROM ASHLEY WILLS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/24/2013

TAGS: PREL PINR PGOV CE LTTE

SUBJECT: D'S MEETING WITH G L PERIIS

Classified By: Ambassador E. Ashley Wills. Reasons 1.5 b, d.

¶1. (C) You have met with GL before and will thus recall that he is a man of spectral gauntness, extraordinary intellect and unfailing optimism. It is this latter quality that I want to draw your attention to prior to your meeting. By all accounts, and despite having been wounded himself in an LTTE bomb attack, GL is soft and inordinately forgiving in the talks with the Tigers. He avoids confrontation with Balasingham and tends to engage in discourses on political science rather than focusing on the issues at hand. We have the impression, in other words, that the Tigers consider Milinda as the more formidable negotiating opponent and GL as a pleasant but not pivotal figure.

¶2. (C) This view of GL may by a little ungenerous but it squares with my experience with him since the talks began. He tends to see this process as leading ineluctably toward a happy outcome and takes the sunniest possible view of Tiger intentions and behavior. I bring this to your attention because, while we all like bracing splashes of optimism from time to time, you may nevertheless wish to discount somewhat GL's version of the negotiations.

¶3. (C) One final note about him. He loathes President Kumaratunga, his contempt for her exceeding ours for Saddam Hussein. He will thus not share our view that she needs to be involved somehow for this negotiation to end happily. You may wish to draw him out a bit on why he thinks she can and should be ignored. You may also wish to ask him what effect a PA-JVP alliance (which is looking liklier) will have on the UNF government.

WILLS